

## SECTION 6: HISTORIC & VACANT PROPERTIES

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- *Images of America* book series: “Gary’s West Side – The Horace Mann Neighborhood,” “Gary’s East Side,” and “The Polish Community of Gary” (John C. Trafny)
- Websites:
  - Historic Landmarks Foundation of Indiana ([www.historiclandmarks.org](http://www.historiclandmarks.org))
  - Indiana Historic Architecture ([www.preserveindiana.com](http://www.preserveindiana.com))
  - The Indiana Department of Natural Resources ([www.in.gov/dnr](http://www.in.gov/dnr))
  - “Gary - America’s Magic Industrial City.” ([www.chameyer.net](http://www.chameyer.net))

The Lake County Interim Report does not provide protection to any of the buildings included in the survey. It only states the level of historic importance that each building or district may have. Also, because the report was conducted over 10 years ago, the condition of some of the buildings may have changed greatly. Some buildings have since been restored, demolished, or damaged.

The following information highlights some of the remaining “O,” “N,” and “C” rated buildings within the specific focus areas. The buildings are referred to by their historic names (if known) followed by the location, approximate year built, current use, condition (such as excellent, good, fair, or poor), and, in the event they are listed on the National Register, an “NR” followed by the date the building was listed.

### **Miller & Marquette Park**

The Miller neighborhood was annexed by the City of Gary in 1918. Because of its close proximity to Lake Michigan, Marquette Park, Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore, and South Shore Rail Line, Miller is one of the most popular neighborhoods in Gary. There is a strong sense of community in Miller, particularly because it is geographically secluded from the remainder of the City.

Miller’s commercial district has been going through a positive rehabilitation process over the past few years. A few store-fronts along Miller’s main north-south artery, Lake Street, lay vacant or are in slight disrepair, but they do not hinder the vitality of the district. A wide variety of businesses, restaurants, and public buildings occupy the commercial blocks and buildings found on Lake Street.

The commercial buildings in Miller are typically one-story buildings with little ornamentation. Most of them are in good condition but there are few that stand out historically:

- **Bethel Evangelical Church** (Lake St. & 3<sup>rd</sup> Ave.) c. 1892, currently a Baptist Church; fair condition; original façade covered w/blue vinyl siding, oldest structure in Miller
- **Miller Telephone Company Building** (541 Lake St.) c. 1920, currently office space; excellent condition

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- **Public School District Building No.8** (665 S. Lake St.) c. 1920, vacant; good condition; slated for reuse by owner
- **Miller Town Hall** (5316 Old Hobart Rd.) c. 1911, vacant; good condition; originally housed substation for Miller's electricity on first floor; NR 1978
- **Miller Depot** (618 S. Lake St.) c. 1920; fair condition

The residential homes of Miller, as with a few other residential sections of Gary, are a reflection of the prosperous years of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. In addition to some Spanish Eclectic, English Cottage, and Bungalow style homes, there are a number of Revival homes, such as Tudor, Renaissance, and Colonial, situated near Lake Michigan. These homes are typically in good condition and have had little alterations.

At the southwest side of Miller is a small residential section called Aetna. Established as a company town by the Aetna Powder Company during the 1880s, Aetna was annexed by Gary (shortly after Miller was annexed) in 1920. The neighborhood currently consists of curving tree-lined streets with modest one-story homes. Vacant, boarded-up, or damaged homes are located periodically throughout the neighborhood. Because of Aetna's close proximity to Marquette Park and Lake Michigan, the neighborhood's vacant homes have an excellent potential for neighborhood redevelopment.

On the north end of Miller is Gary's most popular recreational destination: Marquette Park. Along with the playground, beach access, and tennis courts, Marquette Park boasts two historically important structures designed by the well-known Prairie School architect, George W. Maher:

- **The Marquette Park Bathing Beach Pavilion** c. 1921; East Wing restored with funds raised by the Society for the Restoration of the Gary Bathing Beach Aquatorium; West Wing and central section in need of restoration, specifically the stone stairs and railings that currently have temporary wood stairs placed above the existing; NR 1978
- **Recreation Pavilion** c. 1924, excellent condition; some alteration to original façade

### **City Center Historic District**

The City Center Historic District (located in Gary's Downtown) is one of two historic districts in Gary listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The existing buildings in the Downtown City Center are mostly commercial, early 20<sup>th</sup> century architecture. The architectural detailing on the buildings varies, which creates a dynamic character to Broadway, Gary's main north-south street. These buildings are a representation of Gary's rapid development in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century and its rise to be one of northwest Indiana's most prosperous industrial cities. However, the condition of the City Center has changed greatly over the past fifty years as a majority of the buildings along Broadway are vacant and in poor condition. The buildings that stand today may

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be threatened by development but hold an important part of Gary's historic heritage that, if preserved, can contribute greatly to the revitalization of the area.

North of 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue on each side of Broadway sits Gateway Park, a symbolic entry to Gary's City Center Historic District. Gateway Park houses the oldest building in Gary, The Gary Land Company Building. This was the Land Company's original building and served as City Hall and a post office when it was built in 1906. The Land Company Building was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1979 and was moved to Gateway Park when it was purchased by the Gary Historical and Cultural Society. It currently acts as a museum and visitor's bureau.

A majority of the City Center Historic District is located along Broadway between 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue and 9<sup>th</sup> Avenue. The following are a few examples of historically important buildings along Broadway:

- **Lake County Courthouse** (Broadway & E. 4<sup>th</sup> Ave.) c. 1927 ; good condition; symmetrical style to City Hall
- **Gary City Hall** (Broadway & W. 4<sup>th</sup> Ave) c. 1927; good condition; symmetrical style to Courthouse
- **Gary State Bank** (Broadway & W. 5<sup>th</sup> Ave.) c. 1929, currently Chase Bank and offices; good condition
- **Hotel Gary** (578 Broadway) c. 1926, currently Genesis Towers senior development; good condition
- **The Palace Theater** (765-795 Broadway) c. 1925, vacant; poor condition; demolition being considered for safety reasons
- **Tribe of K Building** (840 Broadway) c. 1927, occupied; very good condition, gothic style terracotta detailing well maintained
- **Elk's Temple Lodge** (801 Broadway) c. 1935, vacant; good condition, street level façade boarded up; architect George W. Maher & Son
- **Sears, Roebuck and Company Building** (821 Broadway) c. 1930, occupied; good condition, original street level façade altered/covered

The greatest opportunity for revitalization and historic preservation on Broadway can be found on the west side of the 600 block. It contains an excellent example of early 20<sup>th</sup> century commercial architecture representing a culturally significant era of Gary's past. Seven of the buildings on the 600 block are listed as contributing in the Historic District which makes them eligible to receive federal tax credits for their restoration. All of these buildings are vacant and their facades are in poor to fair condition. The structural integrity of each building needs to be evaluated to determine if the buildings are stable. At the least, the facades of these buildings should be preserved.

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If restored, the following buildings could play a key role in the revitalization of Gary's downtown:

- 618 Broadway, c. 1930
- 654 Broadway – Tribe of K Building, c. 1908
- 658 Broadway – Holmes Building, c. 1908
- 668 Broadway – Hurwich-Haller Building, c. 1930
- 678 Broadway – Junita Building, c. 1909
- 682 Broadway, c. 1907
- 684 Broadway, c. 1907

The City Center Historic District extends beyond the Broadway corridor. Following are examples of historically significant buildings in the Downtown City Center that should be strongly considered for protection or restoration during redevelopment:

- **Dalton Apartments** (133 E. 5<sup>th</sup> Ave) c. 1928, vacant; fair condition; currently in selective demolition process; planned for future use as residential
- **Modern Apartments** (143 E. 5<sup>th</sup> Ave) c. 1929, vacant; fair condition; currently in selective demolition process; planned for future use as residential
- **YMCA Building** (30 E. 6<sup>th</sup> Ave) c. 1922, occupied; Tudor style details in good condition, street level alterations to original facade
- **Gary Post Office** (601 Massachusetts St.) c. 1936, vacant; poor condition; Art Deco style with marble base in fair condition, damaged brick at rear
- **City Methodist Church** (517 Washington St.) c. 1935, vacant; very poor condition, heavily damaged in fire; currently undergoing selective demolition to become a “ruin garden”; listed as one of HLF’s “Most Endangered Buildings in Indiana”
- **Memorial Auditorium** (E. 7<sup>th</sup> Ave. & Massachusetts St.) c. 1925, vacant, very poor condition; heavily damaged in fire, partial structure was demolished; NR 1994
- **Parry-Shaw Building** (717-731 Washington St.) c. 1926, vacant; poor condition; all windows broken/missing, terracotta in fair to good condition

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### **Downtown Scattered Sites**

Located near the City Center Historic District is a wide range of historic buildings in varying conditions. This includes educational, residential, commercial, and religious facilities. There are a few notable buildings to the east near the new Steelyard Baseball Stadium and overall the residential properties are in very poor condition. A majority of the non-City Center buildings are located to the west between Madison and Jackson:

- **Gary Union Station** (301 Broadway) c. 1908, vacant; poor condition, roof missing, precast concrete detailing in fair condition, interior mostly gutted; proposal of stabilization submitted to INDOT, approval pending; listed as one of HLF's "Most Endangered Buildings in Indiana"
- **Sax Block Building** (537 E. 5<sup>th</sup> Ave.) c. 1920, occupied; good condition
- **East Side Branch Library** (E. 5<sup>th</sup> Ave. & Georgia St.) c. 1929, vacant; poor condition, interior mostly gutted, limestone in fair condition, windows removed
- **Ralph Waldo Emerson School** (517 E. 7<sup>th</sup> Ave.) c. 1908; good condition; good example of Mission Revival detailing; NR 1995
- **Knights of Columbus Building** (333 W. 5<sup>th</sup> Ave.) c. 1926, currently senior development; good condition; little alteration to original façade; NR 1984
- **513 West 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue** c. 1920 apartment building, vacant; fair condition
- **605-609 West 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue** c. 1920 commercial building, vacant; good condition
- **472-480 Jackson Street** c. 1920 commercial building, vacant; fair condition
- **The Ambassador Apartment Building** (574 Monroe St.) c. 1928, vacant; poor condition, windows broken, brick missing in various areas, vegetation on roof
- **First United Presbyterian Church** ( W. 6<sup>th</sup> Ave. & Monroe St.) c. 1913; good condition; little alteration to original fabric
- **Gary-Hobart Water Tower** (650 Madison St.) c. 1909; good condition
- **Central Christian Church** (700 Jefferson St.) c. 1923, in use; good condition
- **The Jackson Arms Apartment Building** (800 Jackson St.) c. 1925, vacant; good condition, windows broken/boarded up
- **Gary Heat, Light, and Water Company Warehouse** (900 Madison St.) c. 1926, vacant; fair condition; designed by George W. Maher & Son

### **South Broadway & Historic Midtown**

A section of Broadway south of the City Center District includes smaller scale commercial buildings. The buildings in this area are in generally good condition. One building that stands

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out the most on South Broadway is the former American State Bank Building near the corner of 17<sup>th</sup> Avenue. The impressive terracotta detailing and large neoclassical columns that flank the main entry are excellent examples of early 20<sup>th</sup> century commercial architecture.

South along Broadway corridor is a district that is one of the most culturally significant areas in the Gary. Known as Historic Midtown or The Central District, this area was one of the most notable African-American communities in Gary and was well known as being a haven for many talented Jazz and Blues musicians of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Historic Midtown is approximately located south of 15<sup>th</sup> Avenue, north of Gleason Park, east of Harrison Boulevard, and west of Carolina Street. With the aid of a Historic Preservation Education Grant from the HLF, the Department of Minority Studies at Indiana University Northwest was able to conduct research on Historic Midtown. A Historic Midtown Tour Map was created indicating culturally significant buildings such as Roosevelt High School, the Jackson 5 family home, some of the first African-American-owned businesses in Gary, and the home of famous educator Ida B. King.

This research done by the Department of Minority Studies can be used as a catalyst to revitalize the Historic Midtown District. An inspiring example can be found in Kansas City, Missouri at the Historic 18<sup>th</sup> and Vine Street District, a similar African-American community that was as well known for being a lively Jazz and Blues area. The 18<sup>th</sup> and Vine Street District is still being revitalized and includes a new American Jazz Museum, revitalized loft apartments, African-American owned businesses, and decorative banners celebrating the district's heritage.

### **Near Westside Scattered Sites & Districts**

A cluster of notable residential areas can be found west of Downtown. This includes single-family and multi-family homes and apartment buildings. The buildings range from modest workers' housing to large Tudor Style homes and impressive apartment buildings:

- **West 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue Apartments Historic District** (W. 5<sup>th</sup> Ave. between Taft and Fillmore Streets) majority built 1920-1930; originally one of the Gary Land Company's developments for U.S. Steel plant managers and some steel workers; approximately 50 buildings, majority currently occupied and in good condition; NR 1984
- **Horace Mann Historic District** (between W. 5<sup>th</sup> and W. 8<sup>th</sup> Avenues and Roosevelt and Cleveland Streets) majority built 1920-1940; large-scale period revival, primarily Tudor Revival; homes good to excellent condition, little alteration to historic facades; winding streets, large yards
  - **Horace Mann High School** (560 Garfield St.) c. 1928, closed 2004; good condition; excellent example of Collegiate Gothic architecture
- **Eskilson Historic District** (Between W. 5<sup>th</sup> and W. 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenues and Cleveland and Grant Streets) majority built 1927-1930; typically one-and-a-half- or two-story bungalows and American Four-Squares; cohesive scale of homes and yards throughout neighborhood; majority in good condition
- **Lincoln Street Historic District** (Between W. 6<sup>th</sup> and W. 8<sup>th</sup> Avenues and Hayes and Fillmore Streets) majority built c. 1920; majority in good condition; Colonial Revival most prevalent style; large yards and winding streets

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- **Wilbur Wynant House** (600 Fillmore St.) c. 1920, vacant; American System-Built home designed by Frank Lloyd Wright; heavily damaged from a fire; history denoted on [www.chameyer.net](http://www.chameyer.net); NR 1994
- **U.S. Steel Workers Housing** (Buchanan St. between 3<sup>rd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Avenues) developed by Gary Land Co. c. 1910-1916, occupancy of homes vary; majority fair condition
- **Ambridge School** (4<sup>th</sup> Ave. between Ellsworth and Rutledge Streets) c. 1923; good condition
- **Engine Company No.8** (2800 W. 5<sup>th</sup> Ave.) c. 1926; good condition, little to no alterations made to existing Tudor Revival building

### Vacant Buildings

There are a number of vacant buildings dispersed throughout the City. While vacant buildings may often be viewed as safety hazards to a community, they simultaneously provide opportunities for redevelopment. Private and public owners should consider adaptive reuse of existing buildings where appropriate. There are certain elements that are helpful to investigate when determining the potential reuse of a vacant building:

- **Historic Integrity**
  - Is the building a National or Local Landmark?
  - Are there attractive architectural details?
  - Is the building culturally significant?
- **Condition**
  - Has the building been condemned?
  - Is the building structurally stable?
  - What level or repairs may need to be made?
- **Building Use History**
  - What was the past use of the building?
  - Why did the building become vacant?
  - Is there a benefit in renovating for the same past use?
  - What amenities remain from the previous use/original construction?
- **Size/Volume**
  - What new function(s) is/are appropriate for a building this size?
- **Location**
  - What use is in demand for this area?
  - What other amenities are surrounding the building?



### Opportunities & Constraints

Maintaining and protecting a historic property is not always an easy task. There are many reasons why some of the properties in Gary are vacant or are in poor condition. However, with every existing issue lies an opportunity for the City to implement programs and plans that have been created. There are also non-existing programs that can be part of Gary's vision to revitalize the City.

### Opportunities

#### State & Federal Funds

It is a common misconception that restoring or renovating a historic building is more expensive than building a new structure. There are a variety of incentives that are offered on state and federal levels for historic properties. Because the City has a great wealth of historic properties, many of them are eligible for the following preservation incentives:

- **Historic Landmarks Foundation of Indiana**
  - Statewide Revolving Loans
  - Indiana Preservation Grants
  - Historic Preservation Education Grants
  - African-American Heritage Grants
- **National Trust for Historic Preservation**
  - Preservation Funds: Matching Grants and Intervention Funds
  - Small Deal Fund
  - Community Investment Fund
- **National Park Service**
  - Federal Historic Preservation Tax Incentives Program
- **US Congress**
  - Preservation Easements Program

Typically, a property needs to be listed on or eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places to qualify for preservation incentives. Qualifications for National Register listings are based on the following sets of criteria created by the National Park Service:

- Buildings that are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history; or
- That are associated with the lives of significant persons in our past; or
- That embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represent the work of a master, or that possess "high artistic



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values," or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or

- That have yielded or may be likely to yield information important in history or prehistory.

Gary currently has two historic districts and eight structures listed on the Register. A few examples of buildings in Gary that may be eligible to be listed are:

- Horace Mann High School
- Gary Post Office
- Gary Union Station
- Marquette Park Recreation Pavilion
- US Steel Workers Housing District
- Gary Heat, Light, and Water Company Warehouse
- East Branch Library
- Tribe of K Building

### Existing Resources

Because Gary is a historically significant city in the state of Indiana, there are many existing resources of Gary's history that are available to the public:

- Historic Landmarks Foundation of Indiana – Lake County Interim Report
- Calumet Regional Archives, Indiana University Northwest
- Indiana Historical Society
- Gary Historical and Cultural Society
- *Images of America* Book Series
- *Gary's First Hundred Years: A Centennial History of Gary Indiana, 1906-2006*

### Building Reuse Potential

Although some of Gary's historic and/or vacant properties may not be in good condition, there are still many buildings that are stable and have an excellent potential for reuse. Also, with the potential to use state and federal incentives for historic renovations, the City has numerous ways to save money on redevelopment. Reusing an existing building can often create a positive element to areas needing revitalization because it will promote building diversity within the neighborhood. There are also some inherent environmental benefits behind adaptive reuse. Since many of the existing materials are present in the building, there will be less raw materials being extracted from the earth. There will also be a reduction in pollution caused by transporting the materials. Reusing an existing building will also help preserve open spaces and the natural habitat. If successful, it can act as a catalyst for adaptive reuse of the buildings and infill of new construction.

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### **Constraints**

#### **Minimal Landmark Protection**

There are three key steps to protecting historic landmarks:

- Creating and enforcing a preservation ordinance
- Creating a preservation commission
- Designating local landmarks

The City recently passed a model preservation ordinance. The purpose of the ordinance is to enforce the protection and maintenance of historic properties, working in conjunction with City building codes. However, an ordinance can only be sustained by the enforcement of a preservation commission. The City has also formed a commission but they have not yet enforced the new ordinance. In addition to enforcing the ordinance, the Commission is responsible for designating local landmarks. Once the Commission begins enforcing the ordinance, the City will be one step closer to protecting its historical resources. In that sense, all three of these elements need to be expedited as soon as possible. Because the city is going through some major redevelopment, some of the historic buildings may be at risk of demolition if they are not protected by the Preservation Ordinance.

#### **Teardowns**

In the past, buildings have been periodically torn down as a result of redevelopment or safety issues. The Redevelopment Department currently has a plan for City-wide demolition listing 3,000 properties with around 50% already demolished. In some instances it is necessary to tear a building down because reuse may no longer be feasible, especially if the building proves to be an economic hardship for the owner. However, some buildings in Gary that are currently vacant have not been properly stabilized causing rapid deterioration. There are many ways the City or an owner can protect buildings from being torn down:

- Mothball – a process where the temperatures are stabilized while the building is empty
- Structurally stabilize buildings
- Conduct a structural analysis to determine building stability
- Reference HLFi Lake County Interim Report ratings to determine level of historic importance
- Create an updated Historic Resources Survey for the City

#### **Public Education / Outreach**

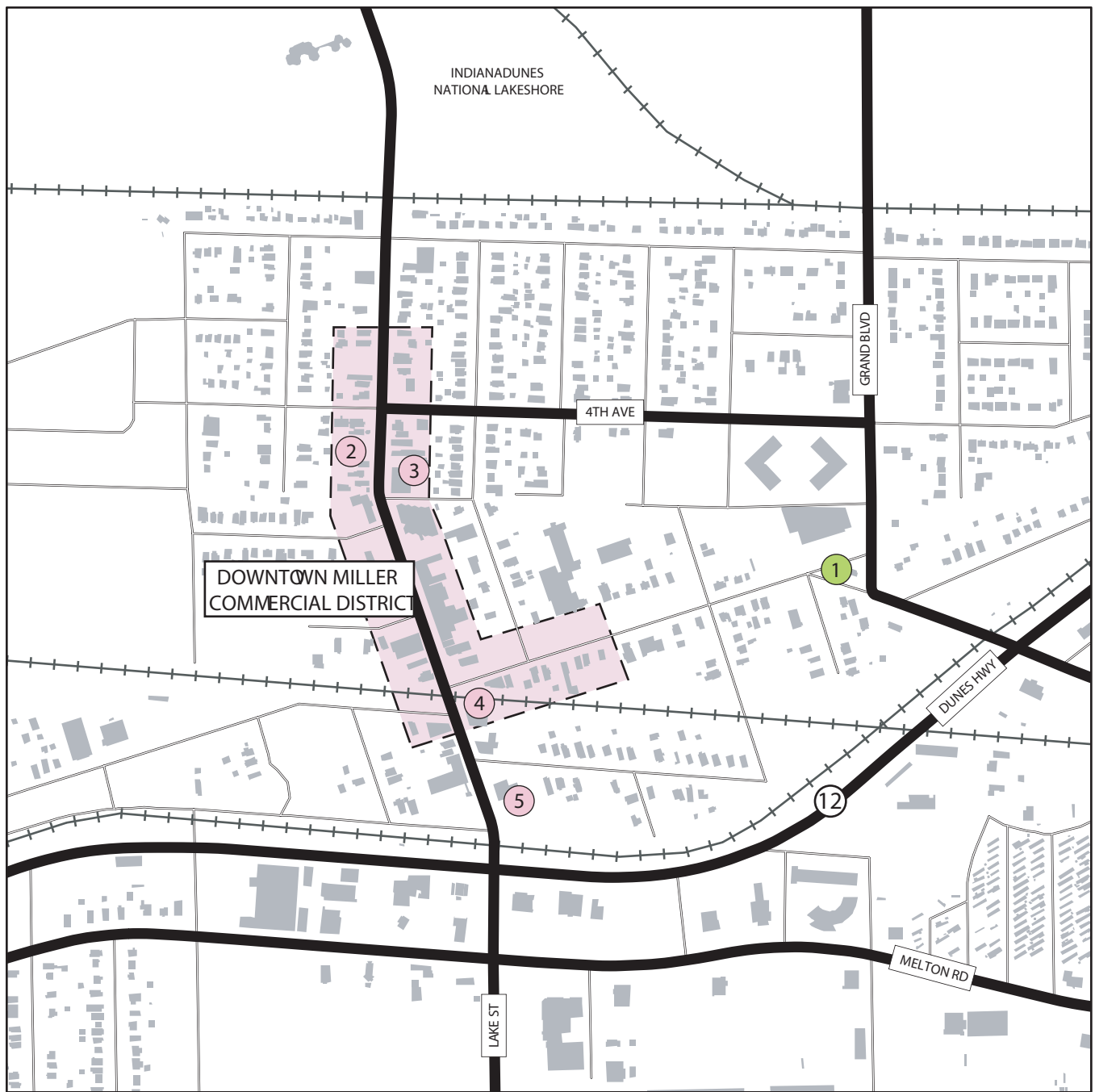
While building owners have numerous preservation and restoration opportunities, they simply may not be aware that such options are available. The City needs to better promote preservation, to educate the public on the opportunities, and to create new incentives for owners to actively maintain their property. A study by the HLFi emphasized that designating local landmarks and

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districts can improve the quality of neighborhoods and increase property values. Once the public is thoroughly aware of the positive outcome of historic preservation and neighborhood conservation, the City will be one step closer to revitalizing its important historic and cultural resources.

Historic Preservation and associated incentives are tools that should be considered for the redevelopment and revitalization of the City of Gary.



## Legend

- City Boundary
- Expressway
- Interstate
- U.S. Highway
- State Highway
- Railroad
- Major Road

## National Register of Historic Places

- 1 Miller Town Hall

## Other Landmarks

- Notable District
- 2 Bethel Evangelical Church
- 3 Miller Telephone Co. Bldg.
- 4 Miller Depot Bldg.
- 5 School Dist. No. 8 Bldg.

City of Gary, Indiana

## Gary Comprehensive Plan

BauerLatoza



RQAW

LAKOTA

THE LAKOTA GROUP INC.

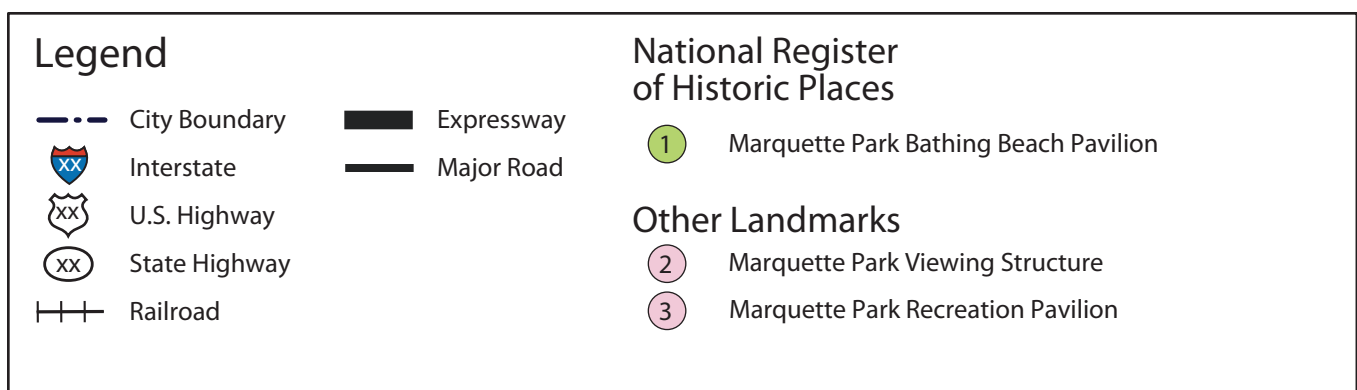
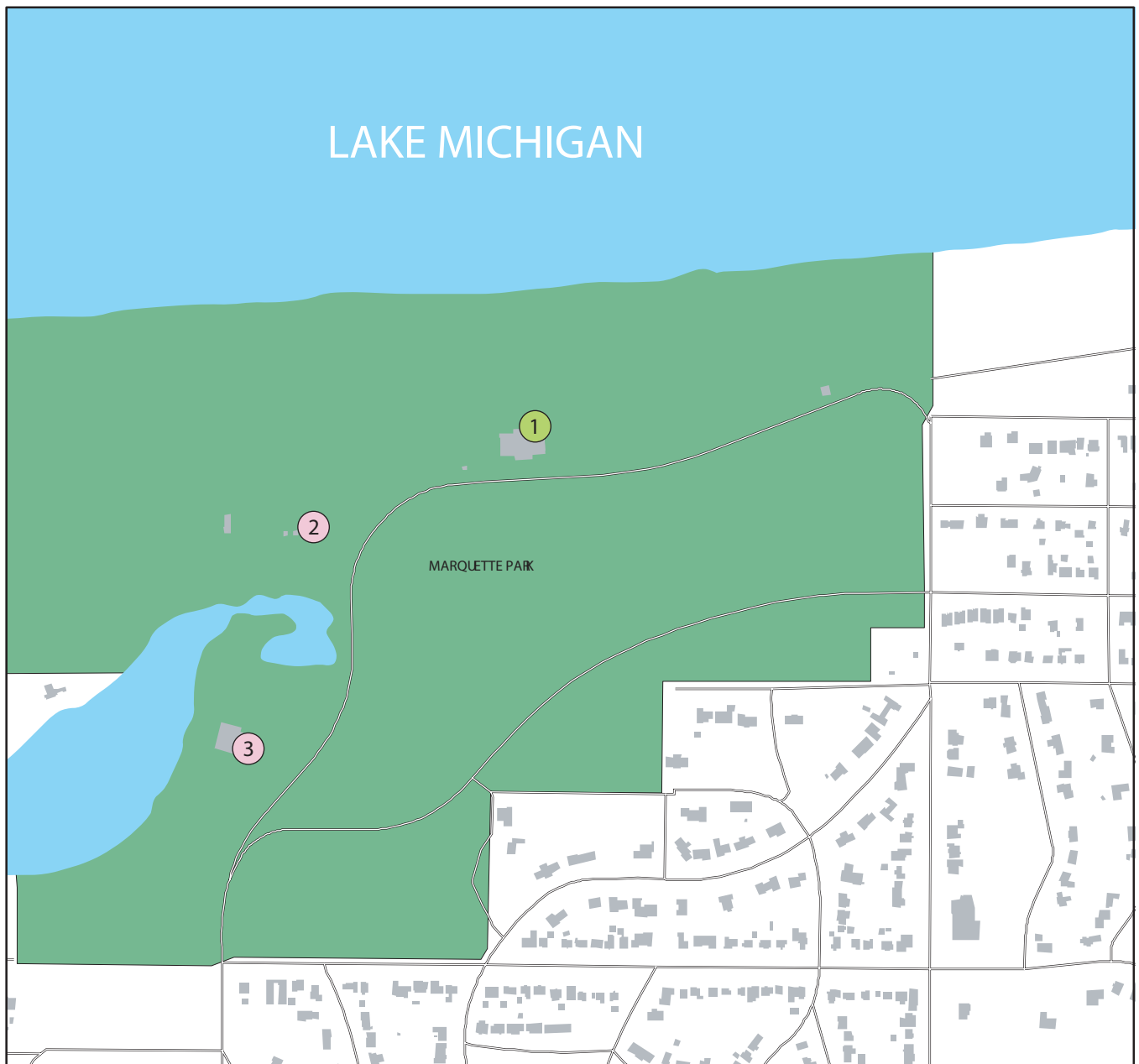
S. B. Friedman & Company

BLALOCK & BROWN



N.T.S.

Figure 6.1: Miller Neighborhood - Historic Properties & Districts



City of Gary, Indiana

# Gary Comprehensive Plan

BauerLatoza  
STUDIO



ROAW  
REALTY OF ARIZONA

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**Figure 6.2: Marquette Park - Historic Properties & Districts**

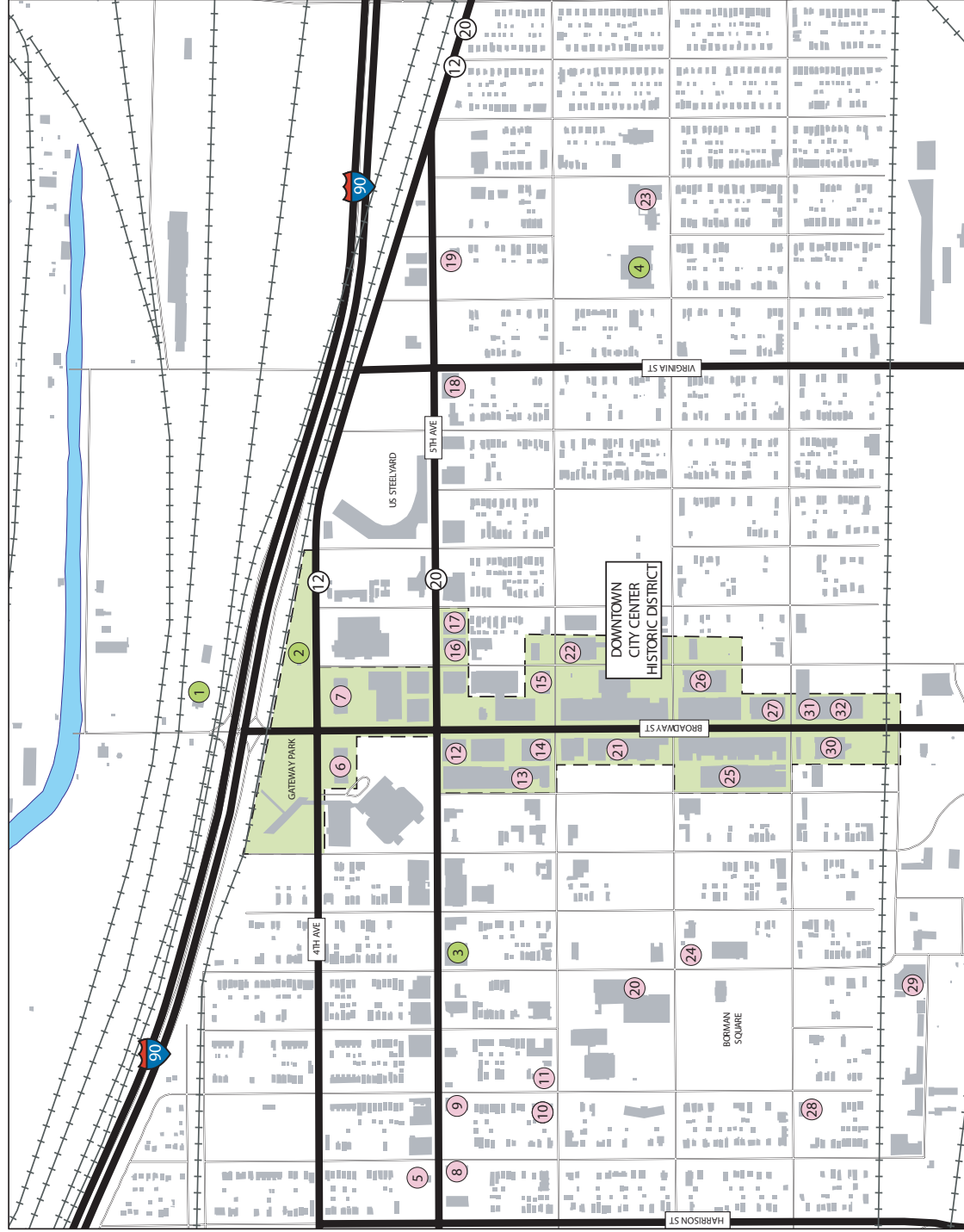


Figure 6.3: Downtown - Historic Properties + Districts

### Legend

- City Boundary
- Interstate
- U.S. Highway
- State Highway
- Railroad
- Expressway
- Major Road

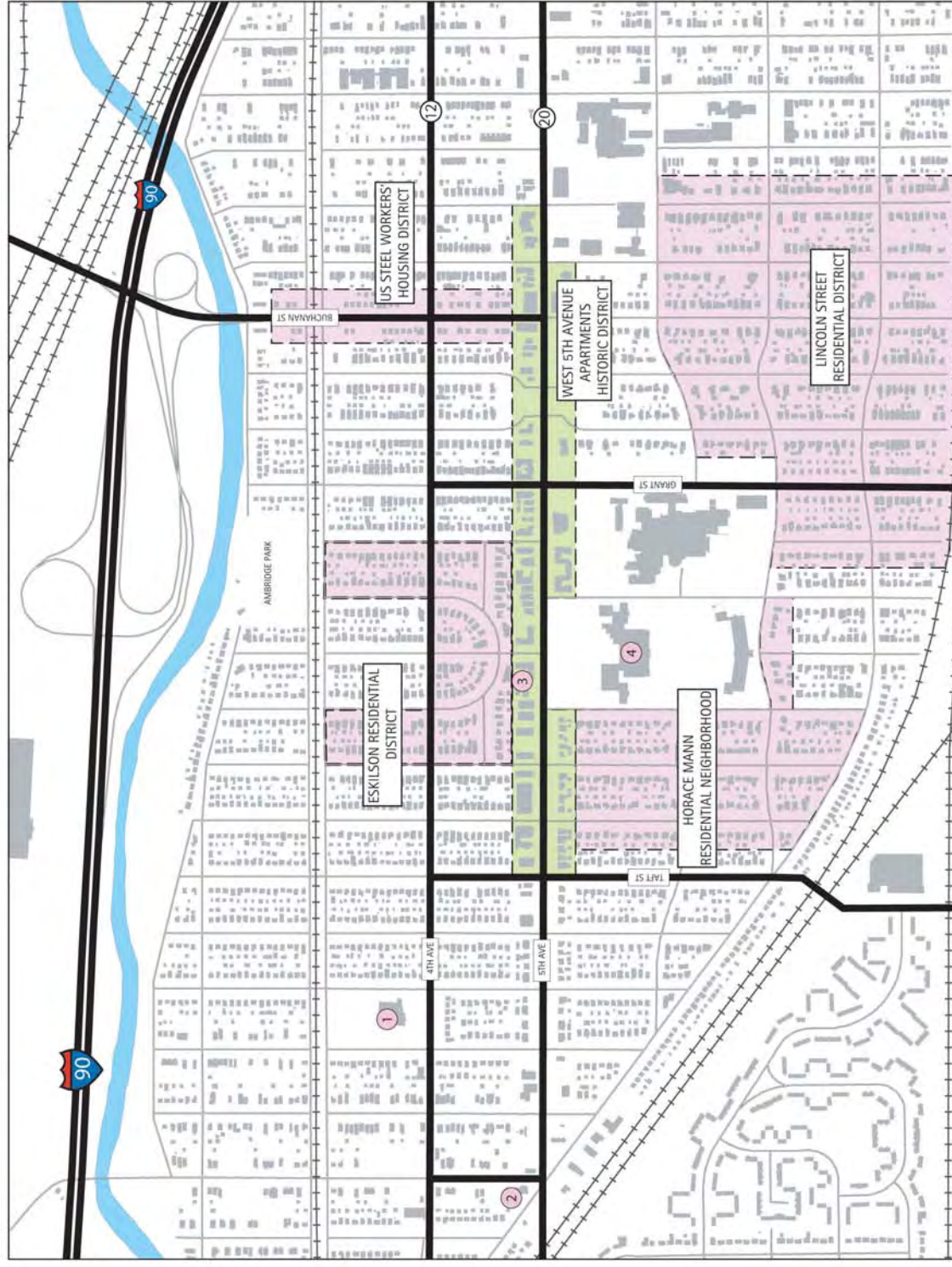
### National Register of Historic Places

- Downtown City Center District
- Gary Union Station
- Gary Land Co. Bldg.
- Knights of Columbus
- Emerson School

### Other Historic Buildings

- 480 Jackson
- Lake Cty. Courthouse
- Gary City Hall
- 605 W. 5th Ave. Apts.
- 513 W. 5th Ave.
- The Ambassador Apts.
- First Presbyterian
- Gary State Bank
- City Methodist Church
- Hotel Gary
- YMCA
- Dalton Apartments
- Modern Apartments
- Sax Block
- East Side Branch Library
- Gary-Hobart Water Tower
- 600 Block of Broadway
- Gary Post Office
- Spaulding Elementary
- Central Christian Ch.
- Perry-Shaver Building
- Memorial Auditorium
- Palace Theatre
- Jackson Arms Apts.
- Gary Heat, Light + Water Company
- Tribe of K Building
- Elk's Temple Lodge
- Sears Roebuck Bldg.





**Figure 6.4: Near West Side - Historic Properties + Districts**

- Legend**
- City Boundary
  - Interstate
  - U.S. Highway
  - State Highway
  - Railroad
  - Expressway
  - Major Road
  - National Register of Historic Places
  - Listed District
  - Buildings
  - Other Historic Districts/Buildings
  - Notable District
  - Ambridge School
  - Engine Company No. 8
  - 1900 West 5th Avenue Apartments
  - Horace Mann School